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Towards Intercultural Sensitivity – Some Considerations when Studying Cross-Cultural Issues from a Lifelong Learning Perspective

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Abstract – In this introductory article, an attempt is made to create an overall view of cultural learning, and of those changes and challenges of lifelong learning taking place both inside the culture and between cultures. Theoretical tools for outlining cross-cultural lifelong learning are the sociocultural learning approach and acculturation theory. The character of lifelong learning in a changing internationalising world and in cross-cultural arenas seems to be very complicated and multifaceted. Where cultures, different groups or different people interact, they must adapt themselves to the changes and be better aware of their relationships to diversity and cultural issues. As a result of the internationalisation and multiculturalism, intercultural sensitivity together with moral citizenship are discussed as an actual response to these challenges in different areas in lifelong learning, such as citizenship, education and work life.

Keywords: cultural learning and socialisation, sociocultural learning approach, identity, acculturation theory, intercultural sensitivity, moral citizenship

Conceptions of culture and cultural socialisation

‘Culture’ as such is a very diversified concept. There are numerous definitions of what culture is. It depends on what perspective is used for examining the cultural influences or culture itself in lifelong learning. For example Eliasoph and Lichtermann (2003) define culture generally as a system of shared beliefs, values, habits, communication forms and artifacts, which may be partly conscious or partly unconscious. Culture is mediated between generations through learning and socialisation. Culture could be understood as a shared meaning system – a collective representation – which means a common language, symbols or codes which constitute community members’ actions and thinking. This definition represents common thoughts on what culture is and how its influences are interpreted from a sociocultural perspective.

One also widely used definition is presented by Geert Hofstede (1991; 2003) who studied work life values in different countries and organisational cultures worldwide. According to him culture is like a collective programming of mind which distinguishes the members of a certain group or social class from each other. This definition also stresses the role of the socialisation and social learning in the human life course. The sources of a person’s cultural mental programmes lie within the social environments in which that person grew up and accumulated life experiences. The “programming” starts in the early childhood within family and continues within the neighborhood, at school, at youth clubs, in further studies, in work life, in the person’s own family and in the other living communities during the life course. Thus, culture is primarily a collective phenomenon. It is at least partly shared by people who live or have lived within the same social environment, which is where it was learned. (Hofstede, 1991, pp. 3–4.)

Despite these widely acknowledged assumptions, humans are no longer under the influence of only one monolithic culture during their life course. Internalisation, globalisation, multiculturalism are

general trends and discourses affecting everyday life, education and work life. These trends have an impact on how lifelong learning and cultural influences are conceptualized. For instance, Stuart Hall (1995) proposed a re-conceptualization of culture: it is not settled, enclosed, or internally coherent. It is formed through the juxtaposition and co-presence of different cultural forces and discourses, and their effects. Humans may concurrently be members of several cultural spheres and act daily in different cultural environments at home, at work, at leisure and elsewhere. Conceptions of 'culture' are changing towards multiple understandings of inter- or cross-cultural influences (see Virkama in this volume). Every human being may be in touch with different kinds of cultural influences. National cultures are historically constructed and fluxed in many ways. In addition, they are constantly influenced by different cultural effects. Salo-Lee and others (1998) state that intercultural communication occurs inside a person's own national cultural communication. In addition, it is advisable to keep in mind that cross-cultural connections have rapidly increased globally in recent decades. People live, act and travel in multicultural societies by crossing the borders of cultural boundaries in many ways locally or globally. Thus, how culture affects us in the socialisation process is nowadays a very complicated process.

When considering cultural learning and socialisation it may be important to look at what is individually and what is culturally bound. Hofstede (1991; 2003) outlined the relationship of individual, group and culture, providing one vehicle for understanding cultural influences on human development. He distinguishes three different levels in human mental programming: universal, collective and in-dividual (Fig. 1). *The universal level* (human nature) is common to all. Hofstede (ibid.) states that this level covers human basic abilities like the ability to feel fear, love, hate or joy, observe the environment and talk about it to others, and the need to stay in contact with others. However, what one does with these feelings, how a person expresses fear, joy, observations, and others, is modified by culture. *The collective level* (culture) is

common to members in certain groups. Humans who share the same kind of learning and socialisation process speak the same language and understand each other's habits and ways of action. It is worth noting that these specific features of a group or category are entirely learnt. *The individual level* (personality), however, is a unique personal set of mental programmes that need not be shared with any other human being. It is based on traits that are partly learned and partly inherited. Learned in this connection means modified by the influence of collective programming (culture), as well as by unique personal experiences.

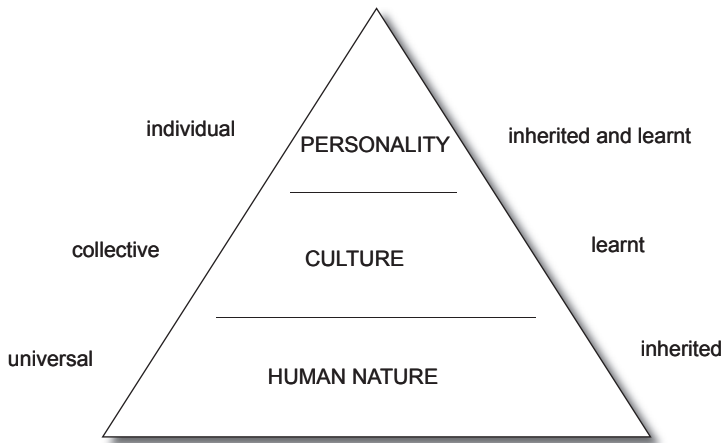


Figure 1. The three different levels of human agency (Hofstede, 1991, 4).

This outline is naturally a simplification, but illustrative, from the point of view of cultural learning and socialisation in the life course. The human higher mental functions – how we understand ourselves and others, what our values and appreciations are – are socially and culturally bound to that cultural reference group, or to the community which is important to us and which we consider as our mental home. Vygotsky (1978; see also Cole, 1998) thought a lot about how human mental functions are mediated through social significances

and linked to collectively divided and historically shaped networks of meanings. It should be kept in mind that culture is not the same thing as the entity formed by the borders of one country (see Kraus & Sultana in this volume). When the world changes the culture is a highly diversified and constantly changing collectively shared network of meanings constructed between humans in their communication and creating a basis for human identity and world view. Thus, not all learning occurs inside one monolithic culture, but rather in the arenas of cross-cultural influences and spaces between cultures, so the image of socialisation and learning is therefore worth widening. Lifelong learning also entails questions of humanity and diversity, which should not be bypassed in an internationalising world. This is something which touches the core of human nature and world views and transcends cultural or national circumstances. A new understanding of intercultural sensitivity in the areas of citizenship, education and work life is clearly needed.

Sociocultural learning as enculturation, participation and communication

The sociocultural approach describes learning as enculturation in the meanings constructed in and around a certain condensed culture. From the point of view of lifelong learning institutionalised educational communities (formal education and training) produce only a minor part of those meanings (like knowledge and skills) which are learnt and needed in the human life course. Enculturation is not merely a matter of absorbing culture as such from outside in, instead, enculturation is highly context and situation dependent. For instance, the anthropologist Robert Aunger (2000; see also Aunger, 2002) proposes that, firstly, it is important to identify the agents behind the cultural transmission. There seem to be substantial areas in which the expectation of informal

educational transmission (non-parental, non-schooling) is fulfilled. Informal learning and activity in social communities produce the necessary practical knowledge and skills in the prevailing culture. Secondly, it is appropriate to examine who has access to knowledge in a community. Not everyone has equal access to knowledge. Hierarchies and power relations in a community give its members differing degrees of access to the essential knowledge. Thirdly, by emphasising the need for beliefs and values to spread, it forces attention on the psychology of information acquisition and construction. Do individuals value what is perhaps necessary for everyday life rather than the transmission of cultural beliefs and values per se? Thus, enculturation may have many manifestations in the same cultural context. What seems essential is the interaction between individual and environment/context, where both actively affect each other. In addition, enculturation always occurs in the context of certain historic times, where sociocultural factors colour generation's life experiences and create assumptions of what is "normal" under the circumstances.

Learning in the lifelong continuum takes place through participation in and membership of activity contexts and under certain cultural circumstances. Apart from teaching and learning in schooling, where learners work with abstract and decontextualised knowledge, Jean Lave (1997) has proposed that cultural learning is basically bound to situations and everyday practices. It is more likely to be non-intentional than deliberate activity. Learners become members of a community of practice where certain beliefs and modes of action occur. Human identity is constructed during the life course by the constitutive effects of the different communities which people are in contact with. According to the social theory formulated by Etienne Wenger (1998), four different aspects of learning appear in the participation process: learning as belonging to something (community), learning as becoming something (identity), learning as experience (meaning) and learning as action (practice). Thus, learning is bound to the meaningful experienced community and to the practices and

identity construction in that community. Learning assumes activity in the community and through participation the activity process is transformed into experiences and development. Wenger (1998, p. 159) also points out that that identity should be viewed as a nexus of multimembership in different communities of practice which influence the life situation at a certain moment in the life course. When a cultural context changes, for example, in migration – and humans participate in totally new communities – the participation processes begin again. After migration the individual's consciousness of who he/she is often undermined (Talib et al., 2004). Identity has to be re-shaped to suit a new place, new communities, new language and a new culture. The core members in the community, in other words, the mainstream population, their attitudes and values play an important role in the immigrants' options for participation and in their identities in the target country communities.

From the point of view of sociocultural learning *identity* is a central concept. As such, the identity concept has been defined in very different ways. The identity can contain the ideas, images, attitudes and feelings concerning the self. It can be constructed in social action by identifying, by committing to the roles and by working challenges and problems. The social construction of identity is based on positioning and agency in the social relationships in a community and in its moral order. (Côté & Levine, 2002.) Cultural, ethnic identity is an example of social identity construction and identification in the spaces in and between cultures (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996). Kraus and Sultana (in this volume) propose that 'national' and 'cultural' identities are not exactly one and same thing when thinking about the source of ethnic identity. As stated earlier, the boundaries of the surrounding culture may be smaller or larger than the confines determined by the nation state. The other sides of our identity, such as gendered identity or professional identity (our educated mindset), may emerge equally well in collaborative ventures between cultures.

The sociocultural, lifelong learning constructed in certain cultural circumstances has an effect on us and manifests as differences in cultural encounters between people and between cultural groups. The effects of enculturation in us become apparent in everyday matters, our habits of communication and interpretation. Communal and cultural influences have produced contextualised ways of acting, communicating and interpreting messages and meanings. Cultural communications are deeper and more complex than spoken or written messages. (Hall & Hall, 1990.) Cross-cultural communication researchers emphasise how human observations and interpretations are culturally bound and how differently the same social situations are interpreted and understood (Salo-Lee et al. 1998). The interpretations in interaction are connected to features of both linguistic and non-linguistic communication. According to Salo-Lee and others (1998) linguistic messages are connected to what is being said and how it is being said, whereas non-linguistic messages tell about the speaker and his/her expressions and gestures in the communication situation. Furthermore, every message contains so-called meta-messages about the articulated content and the interpretation of the speaker in the speech situation, in other words, how the messages must be interpreted. The meta-messages are often non-linguistic. The context and prior knowledge of the other party naturally affect interpretations. Thus non-linguistic communication is an essential part of the communication.

Non-linguistic communication and on meta-messages have different significance in different cultures. This can be a basis for comparison, or for making distinctions. According to Hall (1989; 1990; also Hall & Hall, 1990) cultures can be classified into word and information centred cultures (low-context) or human relations and context centred cultures (high-context). This creates one point of view to go through cultural differences in addition to time perspective, power distance, individualism – collectivism distinction or territoriality aspects (i.e. Hofstede, 2003). Hall (1989; 1990) points out that in a low-context culture the meaning of spoken and linguistic com-

munication (what is being said) is emphasised in human communication. Words are expected to mean very closely what is being said. Non-linguistic communication is not deemed as important, and it is not understood to sometimes contradict spoken words. According to Hall (1989; 1990) Anglo-American main stream culture, German, Swiss and Scandinavian cultures are typical low context cultures.

Instead, according to Hall (1989; 1990), in high-context cultures only part of the messages are expressed as linguistically. A great part of the messages are interpreted from the environment or the context, which means the person, his/her character, non-linguistic behaviour and other clues embedded in the interactional situation. In a speech situation listeners' non-linguistic reactions are scrutinized and the speaker's own speech is adapted accordingly. Hall thinks that several Asian, Arabian and Latino cultures represent high-context cultures. Salo-Lee et al. (1998) state that low-context communication is to be anticipated in individualistic cultures, while high-context communication is more common in collective cultures. In collective cultures group harmony and preserving others' faces is kept very important and this often assumes indirect communication. The meanings are presented non-linguistically and interpreted according to clues and contextual features. Salo-Lee and others (1998) also state that individual culture emphasises people's own opinions and presenting personal aspirations publicly. This often assumes direct, linguistic communication.

However, despite of these contextualized communication tendencies, examine generalization on the basis of cultural distinctions should be avoided. It may be better to move from othering to understanding (see Virkama in this volume). It is very probable that in all cultures there are several different features and when the globalisation and internationalisation trends gain strength, the cultures will be increasingly hybrid, taking influences from each other. For instance, individual members in a certain culture may differ from each other regarding the dimensions of high- and low-context described above, and may favour differing ways of communication. However, the sketching of cultural distances

at a general level helps to understand the different communication and interaction habits and how they may have developed as sociocultural learning in a certain culture, in a certain historical and societal situation and how they affect the members of the culture in question. When cross-cultural interaction grows rapidly, cultural understanding (and literacy) is needed. Berry (2002) points out that notions on cross- or intercultural should not concentrate only on diversity, but rather on uniformity. Thus, the central question for intercultural sensitivity is how to overcome cultural or national differences, and how to enhance shared intercultural understanding (see Banks, 2004; 2007).

Sociocultural learning and the changing cultural context

The sociocultural learning approach leans strongly on sociohistoric and psychocultural considerations when aiming at combining human cognitive action to those social structures where humans live and interact. The sociocultural learning approach defines the primary nature of culture so that the surrounding culture is the prime determinant of individual development and higher mental processes. The human environment and cultural surroundings are examined like a store of options from which developing individuals can appropriate tools for their use when interacting with others. (Wertsch et al., 1995; Cole, 1998.) Whereas theories of cognitive learning and development see humans as active investigators, sociocultural learning theory understands them as apprentices and participants in cultural practices (as novice members) who learn to use tools and equipment with more experienced persons (experts, supervisors, educators, experienced colleagues or others). They may also appropriate valuations and norms in their present community of practice. A central feature in this approach is the idea of sociogenesis, which means that all complex

higher mental phenomena occur first at social plane in relationships between individuals and only after these have been internalized to individuals' inner world. (Cole, 1998; Rogoff, 2003.) This is like an "internalization of cultural transmission" (Wertsch et al., 1995).

Traditionally the sociocultural approach has examined learning and development in the sphere of condensed community or culture, when culture means such groups and communities which share certain known characteristics, like communication and life styles (Salo-Lee et al. 1998; Berry, 2002). However, it is worth considering what learning and growth in a changing and culturally diversified environment means, what kinds of skills and competences are mediated in the changing world, or what kinds of competences are necessary in intercultural contexts. Cross- or intercultural refers to interaction between members or groups representing different cultural backgrounds. The term learning is understood as an acquisition of intercultural competence in recognising the relativity of cultural practices, values and beliefs, including the learner's own. This competence is in many cases called as *intercultural sensitivity*¹ (see Bennett, 1993; 1998).

The sociocultural interpretation of lifelong learning emphasises the meaningfulness of learning of knowledge and skills (Rogoff, 2003): intercultural sensitivity is achieved only when it means something for humans. From this perspective the differences between generations or differences between people growing up in different kinds of environ-

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1. Intercultural sensitivity could be understood, on the one hand, as understandings and awareness of cultural diversity, but on the other hand, it is a personal or collective world view and dialogical competence of acceptance and overcome of cultural distances and barriers. For instance, Milton Bennett (1993; 1998) outlined a model of intercultural sensitivity development, which illustrates learning and transformation from ethnocentric valuations towards etnorelativism. This is a continuum where there is at first a very ethnocentric phase, a denial of difference. The existing differences are mainly repelled and are preferably interpreted through the familiar features of home culture. When valuations move towards etnorelativism, humans must gradually admit that the experienced cultural worldview is only one possible among the others. At best, humans start to appreciate the different values and points of views of the other cultures. This way it will be moved towards etnorelativistic stages which are, according to Bennett (1993; 1998), acceptance, adaptation and the integration of cultures.

ments (mono- or multicultural) become understandable. In addition, it is also essential that physical tools and thinking (material and intellectual) detach humans from the chains of biological or cultural restrictions. The tools created by humans (lever arm, agricultural tools, printing, information technology) have meant giant qualitative steps in the development of culture in general. These steps in history have been global. Cultural evolution is driven by human collective abilities and values. From the sociocultural perspective especially the role of human communication and language in cultural evolution is pivotal. Concepts are tools by which collective understanding and culture develop.

Lifelong learning in a multicultural world could be outlined through human agency, especially through social agency and its complexity in the today's word. The agency is mediated in several ways in a multicultural environment. Sociocultural learning occurs both in the circle of a person's own ethic and cultural group and in the circle of social relationships and meaning making networks between those groups. These social ties and meaning networks offer both support and challenges for identity and its re-construction in changing situations. The artifacts created (tools, theories, models etc.) function as a pillar for human action, but in a multicultural environment, artifacts are developed as a result of more diversified culture and under various influences. Long (2001, see also Teräs, 2007) theoretically embraced the central issues of cultural repertoires, heterogeneity and hybridity. These are useful concepts for widening the perspective of sociocultural learning and understanding it in a changing multicultural context. According to Long (2001, 51–52) *cultural repertoires* are the ways in which different cultural elements (e.g., values, discourses, and ritualized procedures) are used and recombined in social practices. *Heterogeneity* refers to multiple social forms within the same context. *Hybridity* involves mixed end products that are results of combinations of different cultural ingredients and repertoires. All these aspects

emerge in cross-cultural discourses and are signs of the diversity of the changing social and cultural world.

Cultural heterogeneity and hybridity especially have been on the agenda of cultural and social studies for several years now. Cultures have practised exchange of values, customs, or material goods for years without number. At the same time, cross-cultural contacts are changing those cultures. Cultural interfacing and “travelling ideas” between cultures are the key to understanding cultural evolution and this may be manifold: personal exchange via migration, globally mediated communication with ICT, exchange of artifacts, intellectual interchange of ideas, taking part in international associations and networks, policy agendas and idea borrowing and lending of those agendas, colonialism, imperialism, developmental aid, and mutual everyday-learning and understanding. (see Ipsen, 2004.) Thus, when thinking about cultural influences in sociocultural and lifelong learning it is noteworthy that cultures are under continuous change and evolution over time and this evolution is accelerated by present internalisation and globalisation trends.

Acculturation in cross-cultural encounters

When the point of view is moving from cultural learning to cross-cultural arenas or learning between cultural groups, the term used is acculturation. Acculturation is a process that individuals and groups undergo in relation to a changing cultural context. According to Berry (1992, 2007) acculturation is one form of cultural change due to contact with other cultures. Many factors usually affect cultural changes including widening contacts, diffusion from other cultures and innovation from within the cultural group. Berry (2007) defines acculturation as a dual process of cultural and psychological change

that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. Acculturation is a process that parallels many features of the process of socialisation (and enculturation). Because acculturation takes place after an individual's initial socialisation into the original birth culture, it may be viewed as a process of resocialisation, or secondary socialisation, during the life-course.

Acculturation can be perceived as a development process of cultural adaptation and integration in relation to the new multi-cultural environment (Berry, 2007). A person, who has not grown up in a multicultural environment or has not got the training for cultural understanding, is at the starting point of his/her conceptions. The focus is strongly on the person's own culture and ethnocentric values. (i.e. Bennett, 1993; 1998; Salo-Lee et al., 1998.) Instead, multi-cultural thinking, where cultural diversity is accepted and interaction between cultures is a starting point, can be considered as the other end of the continuum. For example, when the immigrant is integrating into his/her environment, he/she does not reject his own ethnic cultural background but accepts the social norms of the new environment and behaves primarily according to them.

Talib et al. (2004, p. 43; see also Berry, 1992; 2007) bring forth that *psychological acculturation* means long-term changes caused by immigration and encounters between diverse cultural groups. In addition to identity, values, social relations and others, there are also factors which are related to well-being, to the feelings of control over one's own life and to the level of personal satisfaction. The last mentioned are reflected in individuals' mental health and experiences of acculturation stress. *Sociocultural acculturation* in turn is seen as fluent social skills in the new culture and as the understanding and acceptance of diversity. Acculturation is always a two-way process, where culture changes humans, but on the other hand, culture is being shaped. According to Berry (1992) acculturation involves processes of culture shedding and culture learning. *Culture shedding* refers to the gradual process of losing some features (like values and attitudes) and

some behavioral competences (like language skills) of one's original culture. *Culture learning* refers to the process of acquisition of features of the new culture, sometimes as replacements for the attitudes and behaviours that have been receded, sometimes learned in addition. These two processes lead to wide variability in acculturation strategies and outcomes and these may create both problems and opportunities for individuals facing the new culture.

The main features in acculturation are so-called acculturation strategies (Berry, 1992; 2007). Not all groups or individuals undergo acculturation in the same way. In the research by Berry (1980; 1992) immigrants' acculturation strategies have been examined along two dimensions, attitudes and behaviours. It has been examined, regarding attitudes, if person's own ethnic identity and values are valuable and worth preserving. Regarding behaviours, the value of social relations and participation in the new society was assessed. (Berry, 1992; 2007.) The process of acculturation may have four different kinds of outcomes based on these evaluations: integration, assimilation, separation, or marginalization. *Integration* means that immigrants want to maintain good contacts with majority and society, but they also respect and cherish their own ethnic cultural backgrounds and traditions. *Assimilation* means an adaptation to the life style and culture of dominant population where the origins of their own ethnic roots gradually disappear. *Separation* in turn means a much stronger orientation to an immigrant's own ethnic cultural roots and separation from dominant population and their cultural influences, while *marginalization* means separation from both, a person's ethnic roots and the majority dominant population influences. (Berry, 1992; 2007; also Lindh & Korhonen in this volume.)

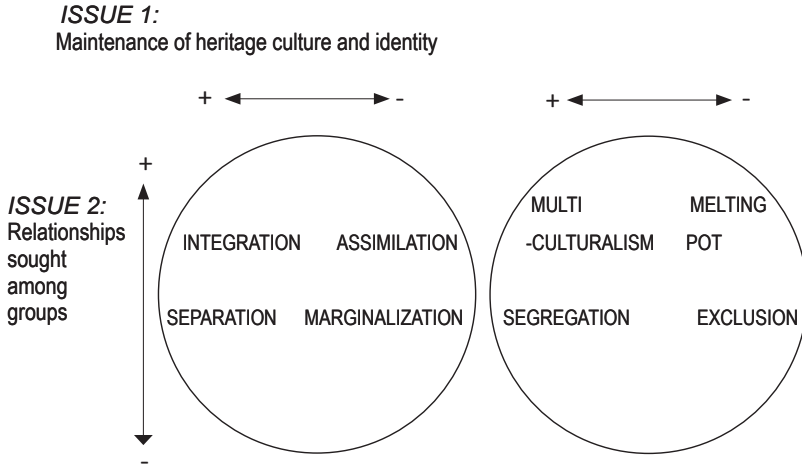


Fig. 3. Four acculturation strategies and the two layers of acculturation (prevailing strategies in ethnocultural groups or in the larger society) (Berry 2007, p. 550).

The situation in society naturally influences how social relationships between diverse cultural groups develop. Thus it is important to consider how a target country's political, economic and psychological atmosphere affects how the mainstream population usually reacts to immigrants and to cultural diversity in general, likewise the prospects for acculturation (Talib et al., 2004). Berry (2007, p. 549) states that there is the general orientation that a society has towards immigration and pluralism. Integration can only be "freely" chosen and successfully implemented by ethnic (or other marginal) groups when the mainstream society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity. *Multiculturalism* (Fig. 3) refers to acceptance of cultural pluralism resulting from immigration and taking steps to support cultural diversity. Berry (ibid.) discusses how certain societies (like Australia, Canada, and the United States as "settler societies") have been developed by a deliberate immigration and settlement policy,

while other societies have received immigrants and refugees only reluctantly, usually without an intentional policy for immigrants and their settlement (like, for instance, Germany and the United Kingdom).

However, as Berry (*ibid.*) points out, that public attitudes among the mainstream dominant population and public policies do not always correspond or favour multiculturalism. For instance, there is decreasing consensus in Australia on how multicultural general policy should be implemented. It is challenged by raising public attitudes of more an assimilationist (melting pot) nature. In France and in Germany both citizens and governments have moved towards more assimilationist views on the acculturation of minority groups. Some societies seek actively to constrain diversity through policies and programmes embracing assimilation. Some societies even attempt to segregate or exclude diverse minority populations in their societies. Acculturation attitudes in the mainstream population are also connected to generations and their differing experiences and valuations. Lindh ja Korhonen (in this volume) discuss how earlier generations' world views can be seen to be based on traditions and local collectivity, while today young people represent different, more individualized generation which is actively creating different kinds of world views for themselves and taking influences from more globally disseminated popular cultures. Young people today will meet and communicate with other cultures throughout their lives, unlike the elderly people, who are just learning the attitudes and ways of action in the more multi- and intercultural environment. Thus, acculturation and the development of intercultural sensitivity in a certain context is one very complex phenomena.

Towards intercultural sensitivity and moral citizenship

Globalisation, internalisation and growing immigration have brought significant new challenges for citizenship, education and working life. In this introductory text the phenomenon is highlighted chiefly from two perspectives: the growing polymorphism of cultures and increasing cross-cultural encounters between cultural groups. Inside the culture polymorphism means cultural hybridization and escalating cultural evolution. Globalisation is accelerating mixture of the cultures when cultural influences travel between cultures (Uusitalo & Joutsenvirta, 2009). With the help of the sociocultural learning approach an attempt has been made to perceive lifelong learning within the sphere of a certain culture and community which takes place still more diversely and through more complex communities in the internationalising world. The change means a mixing and merging of cultures, the enlarging of social relationships and the flow of information (artefacts) at the more global level. Especially, the local dominant population meets the global challenges brought about by internationalisation and multiculturalism from this point of view.

Globalisation and increasing international mobility also increase migration, immigration, international studying and working. Part of the population also meet questions resulting from mobility and migration as personal changes and stories in their life-course (Seelye & Wasilewski, 1996). Part of the migration takes place due to the pursuit of personal choices and individual's options, and part takes place as a consequence of social crises, such as war and conflicts, in the historical time scale (Sampakoski in this volume). The challenges of change brought by migration have been outlined with the help of the acculturation theory. This means especially the interaction between cultures, the integration of the immigrants to the host society, and adaptation to the new culture without losing their own cultural roots. This interaction and change could be examined from the point of view of the immigrant and the mainstream population. For the present the dominant view in studies

has been the immigrants' point of view but the interpretation of different voices is needed, also those of the mainstream population (see Lindh & Korhonen in this volume). An interesting question might be the balance between intercultural sensitivity and ethnocentric nationalism in the values and valuations between the various countries (and cultures). More studies on the subject are naturally needed.

Acculturation approach illustrates cross-cultural encounter between people and groups where the question is about balance and the creation of mutual understanding. Maintaining the ethnic, gender or professional identity can be a challenging task in the immigration situation. In the learning between cultures and acculturation there are always two different sides and this necessitates adaptation by both and shared experiences (see Pietilä in this volume). In cross-cultural encounter and shared understanding dialogic competence is needed. Several overlapping concepts are often used when referring to this, like dialogic learning, cultural literacy, cultural intelligence or dialogic literacy. The main point is, if successful dialogue or shared understanding is not reached, the result is easily negative phenomena like discrimination, racism or marginalization of minority groups. These are not to the advantage of even the strange party.

Behind intercultural sensitivity and dialogical competences, a *moral citizenship* is needed. We could ask if the "the global village" could become a moral community which could take advantage of its moral strength and consideration of others (Smith, 2000). Moral citizenship in lifelong learning means the shared core values of *social justice, democracy, individual rights* and *mutual respect* in and between cultures. It is a movement designed to empower humans to become knowledgeable, caring and active citizens in a deeply troubled and ethnically polarized nation or world. (see Banks, 2004; 2007.) Intercultural sensitivity could be based on such moral citizenship principles, which could be present in different arenas of lifelong learning, like in voluntary work, education and work life and in the discourses of citizenship (or in citizenship/civic education). Concurrently education

is needed to sustain and develop democratic society (Dewey, 1966). Thus intercultural sensitivity and the moral citizenship principles behind it, are a real challenge for societies, for their education systems and for the curricula. Social justice and equality questions in moral citizenship are not easy to reach, even inside the same condensed culture and cultural group. If gendered or professional identities are more closely examined, even they may involve difficult taboos for members of a certain culture, and maintaining social inequalities and discrimination in national cultures. Citizenship and, for instance, gender equality are grounded on sociohistorical power relations and hierarchies and value and ideology systems in societies, in other words, the prevailing moral order (see Chakraborty in this volume). Moral citizenship and intercultural thus sensitivity assume a very deep reflection of learning, identity and values in education and other areas of lifelong learning.

The articles of this book hopefully help readers to understand what intercultural sensitivity is, what kind of intercultural competences are connected to it and what might be the supporting societal moral order of moral citizenship in learning, education and in working life from lifelong learning perspective. From the intercultural sensitivity we can also think of our discourses about it. For example, Hannerz (2003) proposes that it is important to switch to realistically discuss multiculturalism instead of an idealistic discussion. Thus sociocultural learning and acculturation can be seen as a continuing, active and even conflicting reciprocal process. Instead of praising cultural pluralism or the inevitability of cultural conflicts the discussion on multiculturalism should concentrate on how to cope with cultural differences such as they are in the same way as mature people manage with their differences and tensions in their everyday lives (Hannerz 2003). This might be a fruitful goal in many cases. Intercultural sensitivity, and moral citizenship as a core value behind it, means sustainable and meaningful practices and co-operation for preserving well-being, caring and social justice in families, education, workplaces and other important fields of cross-cultural lifelong learning.

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